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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

EPA

NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

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OSWER/OERR | State, Tribal, and Site Identification Center | Washington, DC 20460

Ashland/Northern States Power Lakefront
Ashland, Wisconsin

Ashland/Northern States Power Lakefront site is located in Ashland, Ashland County, Wisconsin, and encompasses Northern States Power Company (NSP) property (the location of a former manufactured gas plant (MGP) that operated from 1885-1947), Wisconsin Central Limited Railroad corridor, Kreher Park (formerly the location of City of Ashland's waste water treatment plant), and Chequamegon Bay. The site is being proposed to the NPL based on evidence that benzo(a)pyrene, benzo(a)anthracene, xylenes, ethylbenzene, and other VOCs from former MGP operations have contaminated soils and underlying ground water, and have migrated to Chaquamegon Bay, a recreational area and a state endangered species habitat.

The lakefront portion of the site has been the location of industrial activities over the past 150 years and currently consists of a landfilled area in the city-owned Kreher Park. Sawmills operated on the lakefront from the early 1880s through 1931. The city-owned parcels of the lakefront were created during the late 1880s to the early 1900s by the placement of wood wastes, soil, sand, and demolition wastes into Chequamegon Bay.

During the operation of the MGP, residual coal tars and oils were produced as a by-product from the manufacture of natural gas from coal Records indicate that the residual MGP wastes such as coal tar and oils were discharged with the waste water. On-site fill soils contaminated with coal tar have been found with free product dense non-aqueous phase liquids (DNAPLs) in the base of a former ravine that extends across the NSP facility, indicating that some of the coal tar was disposed on site. This ravine also contains cinders ash, boiler slag, and demolition debris. Just north of the ravine is a seep where water, oils and tar flow to the land surface. Historic drawings refer to a waste tar dump between the seep area and waste water treatment plant.

In 1989, the city of Ashland performed an investigation on the Kreher Park area for possible expansion of the existing wastewater treatment facility. The discovery of contamination from what was believed to be creosote wastes in the subsoils and ground water at Kreher Park prompted the city to abandon the project. Subsequently, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) performed an assessment of the contamination in 1998. Soil borings and ground water samples indicated elevated levels of hazardous substances. Additionally, WDNR discovered that Chequamegon Bay sediments directly offshore of Kreher Park contain VOCs, PAHs, and DNAPL oils and tars. Disturbance of these sediments releases oils and tars to the water column and surface, causing a slick to form on the water surface. In 1995 and 1999, NSP conducted investigations that further defined the area of contamination and confirmed the presence of VOCs associated with coal tar wastes.

Chequamegon Bay is a recreational fishery and boating area, and there is a marina directly adjacent to the site. The Common Tern, a state endangered species, nests in Chequamegon Bay. In addition, the Ashland Water Utility, serving 9,115 people, has a water intake in the bay approximately 1,922 feet offshore of the Kreher Park area.

[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was scored. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination. See 56 FR 5600, February 11, 1991, or subsequent FR notices.]

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.